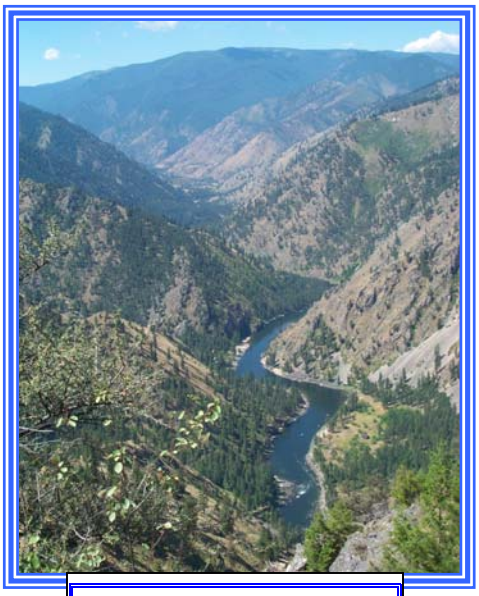
I. Introduction

The Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, Cooperative Weed Management Area (FC-RONRW, CWMA) is located within the rugged and remote central Idaho mountains. The landscape is comprised of deep river gorges and high steep mountains. The plant communities range from hot, dry bunchgrass communities in the lower elevations, to moist cool mountain slopes, with sub-alpine communities at the higher elevations. Noxious weeds including rush skeletonweed and spotted knapweed have invaded this wilderness area and are threatening many of the native habitats.



Salmon River viewed from Painter Point

The majority of area within the CWMA is managed by the Bitterroot, Payette, Nez Perce and Salmon-Challis National Forests as designated wilderness. Intermingled private lands, and lands owned by Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the University of Idaho, are also found within the boundaries of the FC-RONRW.

II. CWMA Establishment

In the spring of 2003, agencies with various roles and responsibilities for managing noxious and invasive weeds within the boundaries of the FC-RONRW agreed to coordinate their weed management efforts. As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by these various agencies establishing the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, Cooperative Weed Management Area. The "Signing Parties" to this MOU are; Custer, Idaho, Lemhi and Valley Counties; Idaho Departments of Lands, Fish and Game, and Transportation (Division of Aeronautics); the University of Idaho; the Nez Perce and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes; and the Bitterroot, Payette, Nez Perce and Salmon-Challis National Forests.

A CWMA Steering Committee has been formed to "provide expertise and oversight to weed management activities within the CWMA". The Steering Committee is intended to represent the Signing Parties and wilderness users. The current Steering Committee is comprised of members from; Custer, Idaho, Lemhi and Valley Counties; Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game; Western Whitewater Association; Student Conservation Association; Idaho Outfitter and Guides Association; private landowners (2) from the Middle Fork and Main Salmon River; and Bitterroot, Payette, Nez Perce and Salmon-Challis National Forests. The Steering Committee formally met in May and again in December of 2003.

The Steering Committee is currently engaged in discussions regarding the establishment of the actual FC-RONRW, CWMA boundary. Options being considered include the CWMA boundary essentially matching the actual wilderness boundary; portions of the CWMA boundary corresponding to existing CWMA boundaries within the wilderness

boundary; and the CWMA boundary including certain areas outside of the wilderness boundary not presently within a CWMA.

A draft FC-RONRW, CWMA Strategic Plan is being reviewed by the Steering Committee. A final strategic plan will be submitted to the Signing Parties for approval in the spring of 2004.

III. Accomplishments

A. Education / Prevention

Education and prevention are critical components of an effective integrated weed management program. Many elements of an education and prevention program have been implemented within the FC-RONRW for many years. Existing education and prevention measures will continue to be improved upon as managers adapt them to specific situations and audiences.

Existing education and prevention measures include;

- Provide noxious/invasive weed management and prevention awareness to wilderness resource managers, and implement direction and guidelines contained within R4 Best Management Practices for Weed Prevention and Management, and R1 Manual Direction, Supplement No: R1 2000-2001-1, May 14, 2001.
- Provide noxious/invasive weed prevention and identification orientation to River floaters at Boundary Creek, Indian Creek, and Corn Creek.
- Provide noxious/invasive weed prevention messages to all private power-boaters as part of the information received with their required jet-boat permit.

Noxious weed awareness during floater orientation

- Provide noxious/invasive weed prevention messages to wilderness users at high use trailheads.
- Solicit input from Idaho Aviation Association and Back Country Horsemen on the Draft Prevention Plan. Ask their assistance in development of prevention methods to retard the spread of noxious/invasive weeds associated with aircraft and stock use in the Wilderness.
- Maintain one or more FC-RONRW noxious/invasive weed display(s) for use in educational presentations, public gatherings, and front office information / visitor orientation. Weed display(s) will include weed identification, potential impacts, components of Integrated Weed Management Strategy, and success stories.
- Provide noxious/invasive weed management educational material and/or presentations to local schools, civic groups and public events.

- Encourage weed treatment crews to seek opportunities to interact with, and provide weed management information to, wilderness users they encounter.

A Prevention Plan for the FC-RONRW has been drafted and is intended to be a "work in progress". This invasive weed prevention plan is available for public review and comment on line at http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/fcronr/index.shtml.

The Red River District of the Nez Perce National Forest is continuing their weed free feed exchange program. During the primary hunting seasons, visitors to the Red River District, including portions of the FC-RONRW, are encourage to exchange their livestock hay or straw with certified weed free hay available at the check station. This program has been very successful in both exchanging hay and also educating the wilderness users. Fewer people are in need of the hay exchange since they have previously been informed and now know to bring certified weed free feed with them.

A Power Point Presentation has recently been developed to give an orientation to the FC-RONRW weed management, the CWMA, and recent accomplishments. This presentation has been shown to Ranger District folks and is being scheduled for presentation to various Forest Supervisors' Offices. It is intended to be available for a wide audience, though modification for a particular audience may be beneficial.

In February 2003, Don Hunger form the Student Conservation Association, and Ron and Julia Garrwett from Western Whitewater Association traveled to Washington D.C. to represent the FC-RONRW, CWMA during National Invasive Weed Awareness Week sponsored by the Invasive Weed Awareness Coalition. Don and the Garretts were able to discuss issues of the FC-RONRW, CWMA with numerous agency and congressional representative. Don brought with him a poster presentation for viewing during the opening evening reception at the Botanical Garden. He presented the FC-RONRW and Lower Salmon CWMA's as a case study in collaboration and program implementation

. **B. Detection and Inventory**

Detection of new or expanding weed infestations and documenting these infestations with a formal inventory process is essential. Lack of diligence in this area can quickly result in an overwhelming invasion of weeds into susceptible habitats.

Andy Klimek and two SCA volunteers assess weed inventory maps in the field

The Student Conservation Association has partnered with the Forest Service for over 4 years. A crew of SCA volunteers, under the direction of a Forest Service manager, has focused their efforts on detecting new weed infestations. Susceptible habitats in the warm, dry canyon environments have been the first priority for detection surveys.

In the early summer of 2003, the University of Idaho partnered with the Forest Service to conduct rush skeletonweed inventory in the vicinity of Hungry Bar. Unfortunately, inclement weather resulted in less than optimum results.

Forest Service and County weed control crews also conduct inventories of weed infestations they encounter. A summary of inventory accomplishments by Forest Service crews is displayed below.

District/Crew:_**North Fork (contract, SCA, & district crew)**		
Inventory	Sites	Gross Acres
Spotted Knapweed	27	1104.6
Rush Skeletonweed	8	648.00
Sulfur Cinqufoil (PORE)	3	620.96
Other Species, (CIAR)	2	0.1
Total "Weed Site Acres" Inventoried	**40**	**2373.66**
Total Actual Acres Inventoried		**1024.22**

District/Crew:__**Bitterroot**		
Inventory	Sites	Gross Acres
Spotted Knapweed	7	141
Rush Skeletonweed	2	.2
Total "Weed Site Acres" Inventoried		**141.4**
Total Actual Acres Inventoried		**141.2**

District/Crew:_ **Middle Fork District/ CR5**		
Inventory	Sites	Gross Acres
Rush Skeletonweed	31	2156
Total "Weed Site Acres" Inventoried	**31**	**2156**
Total Actual Acres Inventoried	**31**	**2156**

District/Crew:_**CREW 1__Salmon River District**		
Inventory	Sites	Gross Acres
Spotted Knapweed	20	716
Rush Skeletonweed	8	356
Other Species	1	.10
Total "Weed Site Acres" Inventoried		**1072**
Total Actual New Acres Inventoried NEW ACRES		**422**
RE-INVENTORIED ACRES		**650**

(Krassel District 2003 Inventory information is being complied)

C. Treatment

Noxious and invasive weed treatments in the FC-RONRW during 2003 included hand pulling, herbicide application and distribution of biological control agents. In summary 33 net acres were hand pulled, 635 net acres were treated with herbicide and biological control agent were released at 47 sites effecting approximately 253 gross acres. Treatments by District are summarized on the following pages.

Sierra Club volunteers pulling weeds along the Salmon River

Hand Pulling

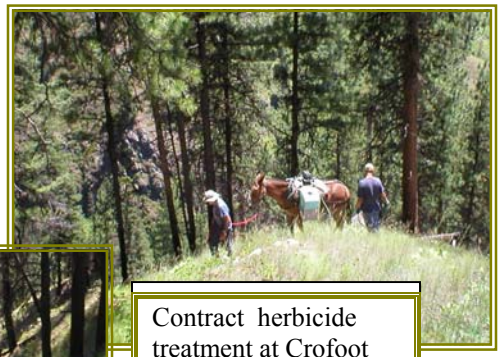
District weed crews accomplished various amounts of weed treatment by hand pulling. Projects focused on hand pulling were conducted by SCA, Sierra Club and other volunteer groups.

Biological Control

Forty-seven infestations of rush skeletonweed were treated by release of biological control agents. The three types of bio control approved for use on rush skeletonweed, rust, a midge and a mite, were released at various sites within the Middle Fork Salmon River drainage, focusing on the larger infestations.

Herbicide Application

Forest Service District weed managers used District weed crews, contractors and volunteers to conduct herbicide treatments on priority weed infestations across the FC-RONRW. Funding sources included Federal appropriations, Recreation Fee Demo, National Fire Plan, and grants from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Idaho Dept. of Agriculture.



Contract herbicide treatment at Crofoot Ranch using mule pack sprayers

A summary of treatment accomplishments by Forest Service crews is displayed below.

District/Crew: **Bitterroot**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed (CEMA)	Mule & backpack	73.75
	Truck	81
Rush Skeletonweed (CHJU)	Mule & backpack	2
Other Species **Oxeye Daisy**	Truck & backpack	7.25
Total "Weed Site Acres" Treated		**166***
Total Actual Acres Treated		**164**

District/Crew: **North Fork District**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed (CEMA)	Backpack	103
Rush Skeletonweed (CHJU)	Backpack	0.5
Sulfur Cinqufoil (PORE)	Backpack	0.1
Other Species (specify), (CIAR)	Backpack	0.02
Total "Weed Site Acres" Treated		**103.6**
Total Actual Acres Treated		**103.6**

District/Crew: **MIDDLE FORK RANGER DISTRICT/ CR5**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed (CEMA)	Chemical	2.7
	Mechanical	.03
Rush Skeletonweed (CHJU)	Chemical	67.4
	Mechanical	1.6
	Biological	47
Other Species, Leafy Spurge	Chemical	1
Total "Weed Site Acres" Treated		**80**
Total Actual Acres Treated		**80**

District/Crew: **CREW 1__Salmon River District**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed (CEMA)	Chemical	105.78
"	Hand pulling by River Ranger program	28.76
Rush Skeletonweed (CHJU)	Chemical	57
"	Hand pulling by River Ranger program	.016
Other Species **Dalmatian toadflax**	Chemical	.10
Total "Weed Site Acres" Treated		**191**
Total Actual New Acres Treated	NEW ACRES	**128**
	RETREATED ACRES	**63**

District/Crew:_ **Krassel District**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed	Chemical & manual	52
Rush Skeletonweed	Chemical & manual	19
Other Species, **Scotch Thistle**	Chemical & manual	0.1
Other Species, Canada Thistle	Chemical & manual	4
Total "Weed Site Acres" Treated		**75.1**
Total Actual New Acres Treated		**75.1**

Red River Ranger District 2003	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Crofoot contract for CEMA	Chemical	90
	Total	**90**

Total for all Districts;

District/Crew:_ **FC-RONRW**		
Treatment	Treatment Method	Net Acres
Spotted Knapweed	Chemical & manual	537
Rush Skeletonweed	Chemical & manual	147.5
Rush Skeletonweed,	Biological Control	47 sites
Other Species	Chemical & manual	12.57
"Weed Site Acres" Treated (704 acres)		
Total Actual New Acres Treated		**639**

Treatment in vicinity of Mackay Bar, spring 2003

Partnerships and Grants

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

The project "North Mackay Bar Noxious Weed Management 2002" was a partnership between the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Idaho County and the Nez Perce National Forest. This project located in the vicinity of FS road 222 accessing Mackay Bar, was initiated in 2002 and completed in 2003. This project involved a) surveys for noxious weeds, and threatened, endangered or sensitive plants in the 1,000 acre project area, b) treatment of approximately 50 net acres by local contractors and Idaho County weed crews, and the establishment of a permanent monitoring plot (nested frequency).

A portion of this project was located in the along the 4x4 road accessing Mackay Bar. This area was treated by the Idaho County weed crew using a truck-mounted sprayer. The majority of the project area was in remote areas where ingenuity and sweat was required to bring water to the site. Since it was just outside the wilderness boundary, pumps were used in stages to pump water up the steep slopes of the Salmon River canyon. Contractors Chip Dorrah and Greg Metz traversed the rugged terrain to "search and destroy" the enemy – rush skeletonweed and spotted knapweed.

A nested frequency monitoring plot was established within the North Mackay Bar project area to monitor the effectiveness of treatment on target weeds and potential effects to non-target vegetation. This plot consists of 5 - 100 foot transects.

Idaho Department of Agriculture Cost Share - Western Whitewater Association Volunteers

Introduction In 2003 a cooperative project for treatment on noxious weeds at and near Campbell's Ferry was initiated. Partners included the Idaho Department of Agriculture Cost Share Program, Western Whitewater Association volunteers, Campbell's Ferry landowners, and the Nez Perce and Payette National Forests.

This project is intended to implement Integrated Weed Management on approximately 150 acres within the FC-RONRW, CWMA. The project is located along the Salmon River approximately midway between the east and west main Salmon River portals to the wilderness (attached map). Campbell's Ferry is a private parcel of approximately 60 acres surrounded by lands administered by the USDA Forest Service, and is within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

Spotted Knapweed has infested much of the Campbell's Ferry private lands and adjacent Forest Service lands. While spotted knapweed is the primary weed species of concern, sulfur cinquefoil is also present. Local infestations of both spotted knapweed and sulfur cinquefoil are increasing in size and density The private landowners have expressed their interest in partnering with the FS in combating weeds on and adjacent to the Campbell's Ferry property.

The Western Whitewater Association is an organized group of jet boat enthusiasts who volunteer their services to treat noxious weeds on the Salmon River in the FC-RONRW. They have conducted organized volunteer weed treatment activities within the FC-RONRW for the past four years.

Accomplishments The Western Whitewater volunteers and Forest Service personnel treated all of the infested private lands at Campbell's Ferry (**appox. 25 gross acres/ 5 net acres**). The private landowners provided use of their facilities and supplied lunch for all of the workers. Western Whitewater Association provided services of 13 volunteers and the use of their jet boats for transportation. Jet boat fuel, food and supplies were funded by the ISDA grant. The Nez Perce National Forest provided services of 4 herbicide applicators.

Western Whitewater Volunteers treating spotted knapweed at Campbell's Ferry

The Clearwater RC&D Council was the recipient of the ISDA grant and distributed the funds accordingly.

A second phase of this project involved treatment of National Forest lands in the vicinity of Campbell's Ferry private lands. Surveys for threatened, endangered or sensitive plants was conducted by Botanists from the Payette National Forest. A contract for herbicide treatment, administered by the Clearwater RC&D Council, was awarded to Chip Dorrah. Mr. Dorrah treated approx **68 gross acres/17 net acres**. Funding for this contract work was provided through the ISDA Cost Share Program. Areas treated include adjacent to Campbell's Ferry, Jim Moore Place, Little Mallard Creek and the 210 trail.

D. Monitoring

Beginning in 2000, 15 permanent quantitative monitoring sites have been established in the FC-RONRW primarily along the main and middle forks of the Salmon River. These plots have been established to determine and assess significant changes in vegetation composition resulting from treatment activities. Base line and first year post treatment information has been collected at these monitoring sites.

Nested frequency plot monitoring Middle Fork Salmon River

The monitoring sites were chosen based on the following factors;

- Noxious/invasive weeds were present
- Treatment was planned in the near future
- Representation of a variety of ecological types
- Locations are relatively easily accessed by boat, raft or small airplane

In 2003, these plots were re-evaluated. In addition, a new monitoring plot was established north of Mackay Bar. The chart below is a summary of vegetative changes following herbicide treatment by site.

Summary of Vegetative Changes Following Herbicide Treatment

Monitoring Plot Location	Grass Species			Forb Species			Tree/Forb Species			Weed Species	
	Up	Down	Static	Up	Down	Static	Up	Down	Static	Down	Static
Main Salmon											
Horse Creek	3	----	4	1	3	11	---	2	4	1	---
Lantz Bar	3	1	2	---	2	2	---	2	1	1	---
Nixon Bar	3	2	4	7	4	6	1	---	1	---	(Up)
Richardson Bar	1	2	4	2	3	4	---	1	1	2	---
Mackay Bar	Data not yet			summarized							
Swimming Hole	2	---	3	3	---	7	---	---	---	1	2
Bull Creek	1	---	4	2	2	4	---	---	---	2	---
Upper Sheep Creek	3	2	6	3	4	5	---	1	2	1	3
Middle Fork											
Cameron Creek	2	1	1	1	4	6	---	---	---	1	---
Indian Cr drainage	2	2	3	3	8	10	---	---	3	1	---
Indian Creek	3	2	1	1	---	13	3	1	3	1	---
Little Creek	1	---	3	1	4	6	1	---	2	1	---
Mormon Ranch	1	4	1	4	3	6	---	---	1	---	1
Sheep Creek	4	2	3	5	7	8	---	2	3	1	1
Sunflower Creek	1	1	4	2	8	6	---	---	1	1	---
Summary Total	30	19	43	35	52	94	5	9	22	14	7 + 1

IV. Preparing for 2004

Funding shortages for integrated weed management in the FC-RONRW will likely result in constraints to planned accomplishments in 2004. Aggressive efforts are being made to establish partnerships to assist in program funding and accomplishments. At this time partnership grants from the National Forest Foundation, Wildlife Forever, Idaho and Minnesota/Wisconsin Chapters of Foundation for North American Wild Sheep have been offered to the FC-RONRW, CWMA. Similar partnership grants are expected from other conservation organizations.

Integrated Weed Management is authorized in the FC-RONRW as described in the 1999 Environmental Impact Statement for Noxious Weed Treatment in the FC-RONRW. The decisions made as the result of this EIS are being reviewed for extension beyond 2004. The Bitterroot, Payette, Nez Perce and Salmon-Challis National Forests have therefore initiated an analysis of the existing integrated weed management program in the FC-RONRW. This analysis will culminate in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Noxious Weed Treatment in the FC-RONRW. The draft SEIS is planned to be released for review in late January or early February 2004.

Appendix I;

2003 Steering Committee

FC-RONRW CWMA Steering Committee List					
Name	Title	Address	City	State	Zip Code
Howard Lyman	Chairman, CWMA	HC 01 Box 70	White Bird	ID	83554
Ken Wotring	Vice-Chairman, CWMA	RR2 Box 600	Salmon	ID	83467
Dan Pierce	Clearwater RC&D	PO Box 9576	Moscow	ID	83843
Greg Painter	Idaho DF&G	PO Box 1336	Salmon	ID	83467
Bob Spencer	Division of Ag Resources	PO Box 790	Boise	ID	83701
Grant Simonds	Idaho Outfitters Assoc	PO Box 95	Boise	ID	83701
Carl Crabtree	ID County Weed Control	320 W Main Rm #3	Grangeville	ID	83530
Mike Overaker	Lemhi County Weed Control	201 Broadway	Salmon	ID	83467
John Johan	Valley County Weed Control	PO Box 1350	Cascade	ID	83611
Jim Hawkins	Custer County Weed Control	PO Box 160	Challis	ID	83226
Don Hunger	Student Conservation Assoc	305 N Forest St	Bellingham	WA	98225
Scott Farr	Simplot Ranch	PO Box 64	Challis	ID	83226
Jim Mozingo	Allison Ranch	HC 83 Allison Ranch	Cascade	ID	83611
Pete Grinde	Payettee National Forest	PO Box 1026	McCall	ID	83638
Gil Gale	Bitterroot National Forest	1801 N First	Hamilton	MT	59840
Tom Gionet	Salmon-Challis National Forest	PO Box 180	North Fork	ID	83466
Leonard Lake	Nez Perce National Forest	Rt 2 Box 475	Grangeville	ID	83530

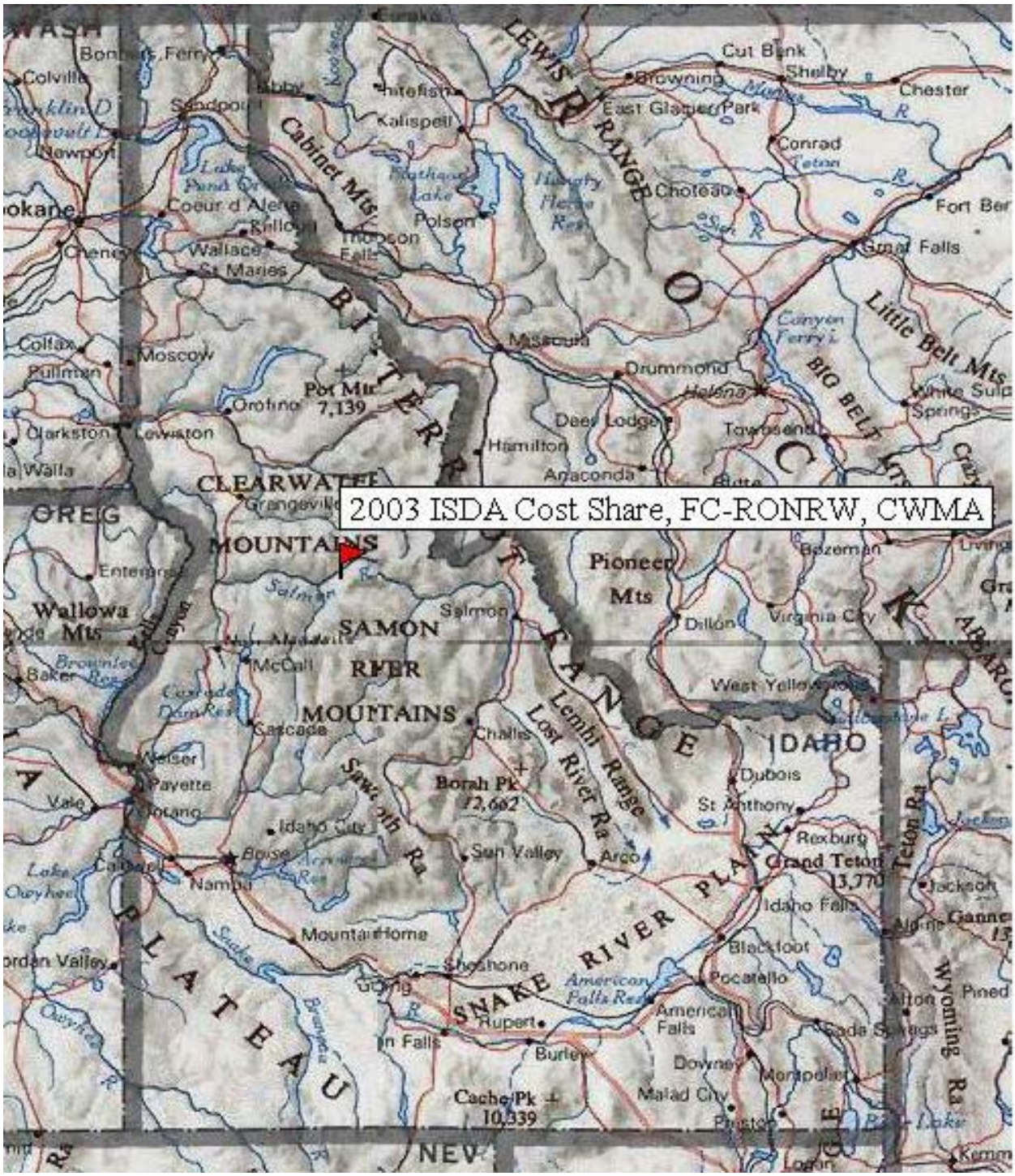
Appendix II;

ISDA Cost Share Project Summary

Category	Weed Species	Acres Treated
Herbicide Treatment	Spotted Knapweed / Sulfur Cinquefoil	93 gross / 22 net acres

(See page 9 for project narrative)

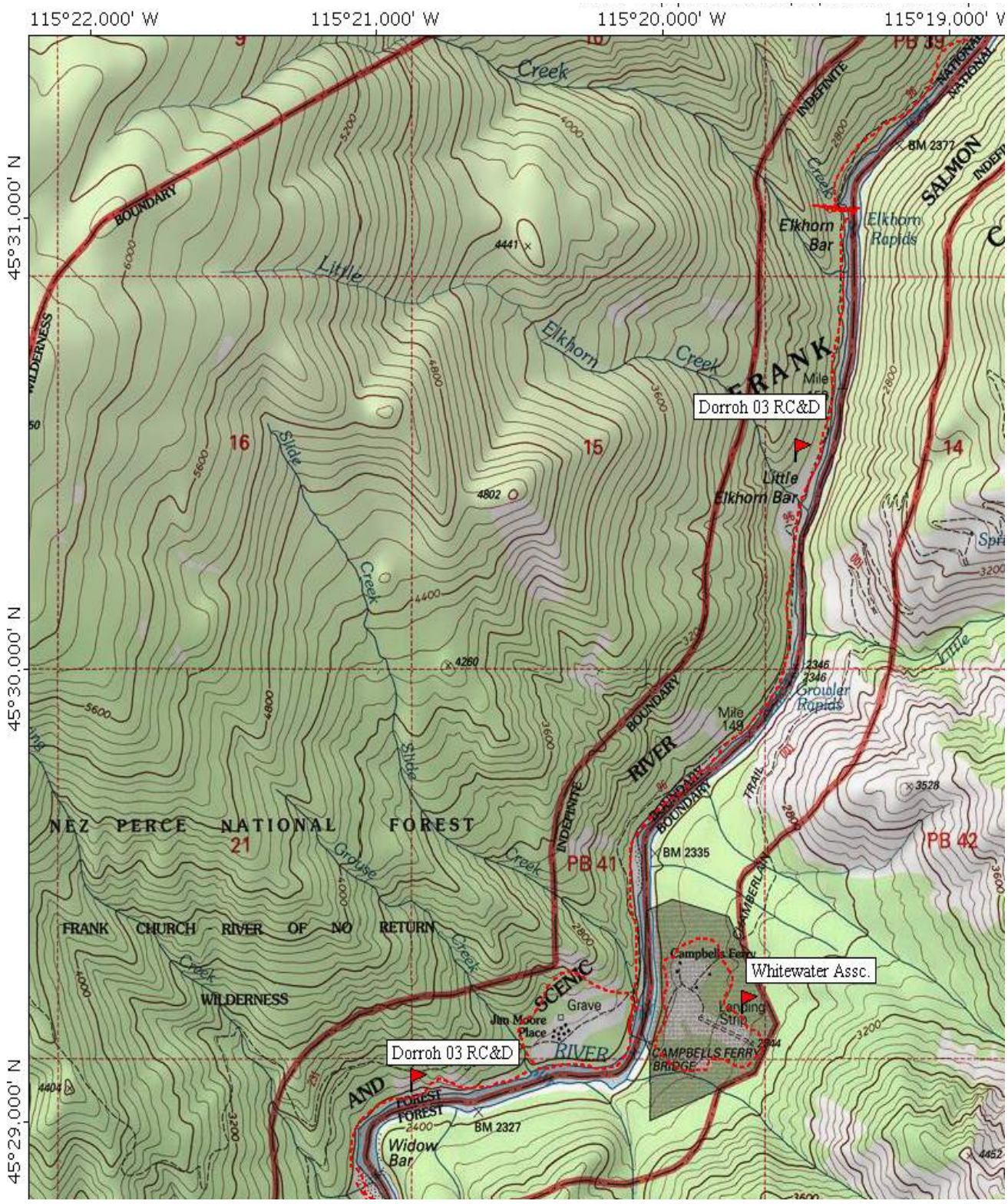
ISDA Cost Share
Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness,
Cooperative Weed Management Area
Weed Treatment 2003



Treatment Area, 2003

- - - - - **Western Whitewater Association Volunteer Treatment**

- - - - - **Dorroh Contract Treatment (page 1)**



Treatment Area, 2003

- - - - - **Dorroh Contract Treatment (page 2)**